

SmoothieJune

***Recipes, reviews, and reflections on a month of
smoothies***

by Cheryl DeWolfe

ADVANCE READERS' COPY - NOT FOR REDISTRIBUTION

Contents and photos copyright © Cheryl DeWolfe 2012-2014

ISBN 978-0-9866970-7-4

Published by ThoseDeWolfes, Victoria BC

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, at the address below.

ThoseDeWolfes

3139 Blackwood St

Victoria BC V8X 1C6

www.thosedewolfes.com

Cover Design by Cheryl DeWolfe.

Preface

I can't remember the first time I made a smoothie, but for years, my breakfast smoothie was exactly the same thing: milk, banana, strawberries (sometimes blueberries or blackberries) brown sugar, and a raw egg. I'd make them about a half dozen times a year.

Usually, my breakfast was either cereal-based or something greasy like eggs, bacon and hash-browns. Fruit and vegetables rarely made an appearance to start my day. Worse, I was usually so hungry by 10 a.m. that I'd grab baked goods from the café next-door to my office to combat my crash. Of course, that slice of cake, oversized muffin or giant cookie only made the roller coaster more severe, making me hungrier by noon than I had been at 10.

In the spring of 2012, after reading countless recipes and tips on making smoothies through Pinterest pins, I was inspired to experiment with new variations for breakfast. The first thing I tried was to add rolled oats instead of the raw egg. It made the smoothie much more filling, and the texture, while different, was not objectionable.

In May 2012, I decided to embark on a personal challenge: for the month of June, I would try a different smoothie recipe every day (Monday to Friday) and write about how it measured up. I tagged every post "smoothiejune" and it just made sense to carry that over as the title of this book.

While it wasn't my goal to lose weight by making smoothies my go-to breakfast, it was an undeniable and welcome side effect. I also experienced increased energy; even better, I was more regular, less likely to reach for junk food during coffee break (my primary goal), and felt healthier.

Pleased by these immediate rewards, I greatly expanded my smoothie repertoire, finding a half dozen smoothie variations that I still use regularly. Nearly two years later, I still make smoothies at least three days a week (except when the temperature dips below zero).

If you are on the fence about smoothies, I'd like to encourage you to take the SmoothieJune challenge. Try smoothies for a month. It doesn't have to be June, and it doesn't have to be every day; my original challenge still allowed me to splurge

on the weekends. Whether you take inspiration or recipes from this book, from Pinterest, or from another source, there are thousands to choose from; SmoothieJune is just a starting point.

Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank all the bloggers and pinners who shared their recipes and ideas and who inspired me to try new things. Thanks are also due to my family who awoke more than once to my cursing at the blender or whining about a recipe or technique that seemed more complicated than it needed to be. Many thanks to Shawn DeWolfe for his savoury smoothie recipes and tips, and to my editor, Renée Layberry, for taking on my comma faults, misspellings, and other faux pas.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Acknowledgements.....	1
Table of Contents.....	1
Introduction	2
A word about equipment.....	3
Smoothie bases: liquids and fruit	3
Smoothie thickeners	4
Smoothie power-ingredients: greens	4
Smoothie power ingredients: nuts, seeds, and grains	5
Smoothie sweeteners	6
The SmoothieJune Challenge.....	6
The SmoothieJune posts	6
Smoothie A Day For June – May 27, 2012	6
Cherry Vanilla Oatmeal – June 1, 2012.....	7
Vanilla Chai Breakfast Shake – June 4, 2012.....	8
Almond Banana Flaxseed – June 5, 2012.....	9
Cheery Cherry Detox – June 6, 2012.....	9
Refresh Mango Ginger – June 7, 2012	10
Anti-bloat Chocolate Berry – June 8, 2012	11
Carrot-Pineapple – June 11, 2012.....	11
Green Monster – June 12, 2012	12
Immune-Boosting Berry-Spinach – June 13, 2012.....	12
Fruit and Veggies – June 14, 2012	13
Pumpkin Gingerbread – June 15, 2012	13
Lemon-Orange Citrus – June 18, 2015.....	14
Strawberry-Banana-Kiwi – June 19, 2015	15
Spring Clean your Diet – June 20, 2012	15
Straight A – June 21, 2012	16
Banana Pineapple Green – June 22, 2012	17
Pineapple-Mango – June 25, 2012.....	17
Peach-Raspberry – June 26, 2012	18
Harper’s Favorite – June 27, 2012	18
Chocolate-Raspberry – June 28, 2012	18
Coffee-Banana – June 29, 2012	19
New Recipes and Reviews.....	21
Protein Powder Power-up (blogged October 13, 2013)	21
Alice’s Basic Breakfast Smoothie	21
Cheryl’s Greenya Colada	22
Green Tea Fruit Refresher.....	22
Shawn’s Green Thai Smoothie	23
Shawn’s Spicy Hoisin Smoothie	23

Zombie Smoothie (blogged March 5, 2013)	24
A few final words	25
About the author	26

Introduction

The popularity of smoothies as part of a balanced diet continues to soar with new recipes and variations being shared through social media, on health blogs, and in traditional media every week.

Smoothies are easy to make, portable, and can easily be packed with a significant portion of the recommended daily allowance of fruit, vegetables, vitamins, and minerals as well as protein and fibre.

SmoothieJune grew out of a personal challenge to try new recipes I'd been finding online with the goal of finding something that would keep me full long enough to ditch my habit of buying baked goods at coffee break. Why "smoothiejune"? I did the challenge in June 2012, trying a different recipe every weekday for a month. I tagged every post *smoothiejune*, and the name just stuck. It's also a great reminder that any month can be a good time to choose to make a change for the better when it comes to health and nutrition.

This book includes all of my original smoothiejune posts as posted on my personal blog, *Flotsam & Jetsam*. In addition to minor edits to the original content, I have included the recipes in those places where I only linked to them in the original posts, and I have appended a "last word" as a reflection on each recipe.

As part of the introduction, I've also included a word about equipment, and some information about smoothie bases, thickeners, power ingredients and sweeteners.

I outline the SmoothieJune Challenge before getting down to business with the original posts and new recipes and reviews. For consistency, the images have been included at the end of the text of each post and review.

After the original smoothiejune posts, you'll find some new recipes and reviews, including some savoury smoothies contributed by my husband, Shawn. You'll also find our daughter's favourite simple smoothie; while it is not as packed with nutrition as some recipes; it is far healthier than a bowl of sugared cereal or toaster strudels.

At the end, I weigh in on the benefits and add a few final thoughts about my month of smoothies and the time since.

A word about equipment

The most important piece of equipment is the blender you choose. I'll be honest: the blender I used throughout my original smoothiejune challenge was not the right one for the job. It had two blades and was underpowered. I came close to

burning out the motor and more than once cursed it for being near useless in the face of blending ice or other hard ingredients.

A few months later, we replaced it with a four-blade, five-speed blender. You can tell if your blender is up to the task almost by its weight alone. I'm not going to tell you to go out and spend hundreds of dollars on a top-of-the line blender, but I will tell you that if your blender is the weak link in the chain, you will be frustrated with all but the most simple smoothie recipes.

Until you get used to judging portion sizes, measuring cups and spoons are going to be useful; don't panic if you go slightly over or under on any ingredient. Smoothies are not an exact science.

How you serve it can also have an impact on your enjoyment. Some of the recipes taste a lot better than they look, so glass is not always the best option. I have a stainless steel cold drink travel container that is my first choice for those smoothies that come out a bit on the brown side. Of course, a nice purple or pink smoothie looks great in a glass with a nice straw. If you aren't a fan of throwing out all those plastic straws, you can invest in stainless steel, glass or reusable hard plastic straws. Most of my recipes make 16 oz /500 ml or thereabouts, so larger glasses may be a good investment.

Smoothie bases: liquids and fruit

All smoothies contain liquid and fruit. Most contain something to thicken the consistency, and additions to make them more filling and/or more nutritious.

Where the recipe calls for milk, you can usually use any milk, whether dairy, soy, almond, or coconut milk. I am a huge fan of using whatever is in your fridge, but sometimes one milk may taste better in the recipe than another. Where this is the case, I try to make that recommendation. In most recipes, I have found that almond milk is the best for blending as it provides a smoother texture; it is also the lowest-calorie option and carries the benefit of added protein. Of course, if you have nut sensitivities, it's off the list!

Not every smoothie is milk based; some use juice, coconut water, or filtered water as the base. However, these generally require more fruit or other thickeners.

I'm pretty critical when a recipe calls for fresh-squeezed juice in any amount greater than a single squeeze of citrus. At 6:30 a.m. I have neither the time nor the energy to fresh-squeeze several oranges. I will use fruit juices from time to time, but always try to check that they are fruit + water; wherever possible, I choose pure fruits rather than blends, which tend to be primarily grape juice.

Bananas are the key to most of the recipes I have tried and that I continue to make. Along with potassium and natural sweetness, bananas are high in vitamin B-6 which plays an important role in both metabolism and brain chemistry.

Similarly, fresh and frozen berries are mostly interchangeable, but too many cups of frozen fruit will result in a too-thick-to-sip smoothie. If you are concerned, thaw berries in the fridge overnight.

Beware of canned fruit packed in syrup; this can dramatically increase the sweetness of the smoothie and the calories you consume. If you are prone to “sugar-crashes,” syrup-packed fruit is a common trigger. This is especially difficult to avoid with stone fruits like peaches and cherries; there is usually a juice-packed option for pineapple or pear slices. I found frozen peaches, but cherries were a very difficult item to source.

Smoothie thickeners

Some recipes call for frozen bananas instead of fresh; this is usually to do with the texture. You can make “banana ice cream” by just blending frozen bananas as they thicken to the same consistency. You can substitute fresh bananas, but your smoothie may not have the intended texture. Always peel bananas before freezing and, to make them quicker to blend, you may also want to slice and bag them.

Where yogurt is called for, my default is plain Greek-style yogurt; quite often any yogurt, including dairy-free alternatives is a fair substitute, but beware of flavoured yogurts that have sugary syrup as a component. Using plain yogurt and adding your sweetener or flavouring of choice offers you more control over what goes into your smoothie.

I often look to applesauce (plain, unsweetened) as a sweet thickener where dairy may not give me the right flavor, but it’s also a good option if you are avoiding dairy. Other dairy-free alternatives include adding another half or whole banana, or using frozen banana instead of fresh. Other frozen fruit or ice will also make a thicker smoothie.

Smoothie power-ingredients: greens

One of the most common additions to smoothies are greens—specifically dark, leafy greens. Both spinach and kale are available frozen, which makes them easier to break down and blend; however, I find they are far stronger in flavor. Fresh baby spinach is the easiest green to “hide” in any smoothie, and the peanut-butter smoothie is the easiest smoothie to hide any green in.

I discovered that I had to work up to kale, and it wasn’t until I grew some of my own that I finally discovered how easy it could be to work in. Younger, more

tender leaves are the easiest to blend and the mildest tasting. If you are using mature kale leaves, tear the leaf away from the centre and discard the tough stem. Parsley, cilantro, and other greens have flavors that don't always play well in smoothies. Take care when adding these, even in small amounts.

Another option is to find a powdered green booster you enjoy, but I have yet to find one that doesn't make me want to throw out my smoothie.

Non-leafy greens like celery and broccoli can be considered for savory smoothies like Shawn's Thai Smoothie, but should not be included in most sweet smoothies.

Smoothie power ingredients: nuts, seeds, and grains

Aside from greens, many smoothies include nuts, seeds and grains that add fibre, protein and other benefits. Some of the most common additions are listed below, along with their benefits.

Almonds – Use whole raw almonds if your blender can take it; otherwise, crush them before adding, using a tenderizer or mortar and pestle. Almonds boost protein, calcium, magnesium, potassium and iron.

Chia Seeds – I don't enjoy the texture of the full, tiny seeds, so I always buy ground chia. Chia seeds boost fibre and protein and contain omega-3 alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), an essential fatty acid that has been shown to reduce stress, depression, and anxiety; it may also improve overall cardiovascular health.

Coconut oil – Adding oil to smoothies? It seems counter-intuitive, but coconut oil is a metabolism booster. Recent studies have consistently shown that coconut oil can help control appetite and burn more calories faster when one consumes one to two tablespoons daily.

Flax seeds – In order to get the health benefit of flax seeds, you need to use flax meal; whole seeds will pass through the system undigested. Like chia, flax also contains ALA and boosts fibre; it also contains *lignans* which have antioxidant properties; lignans are also anti-inflammatory and may help lower cholesterol levels.

Hemp seeds – Shelled hemp seeds are a very balanced addition that contain ALA and all amino acids; they also boost protein. The amino acids make them a particularly good choice for those following a vegan or raw food diet. Hemp seeds are also rich in vitamin E, zinc, calcium, phosphorous, magnesium and iron.

Oats – Use regular rolled oats; either blend them first (dry) before adding other ingredients, or soak them before blending. While you might be tempted to use packaged instant oatmeal (I have in a pinch), beware of added sugars and

preservatives in those envelopes. If you have a food processor, a few pulses can make “instant” style oats in a snap.

Oats, like almonds, boost protein, calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron, but for me the magic of oats is how they moderate digestion by balancing blood-sugar levels and controlling appetite. Oats have been shown to help reduce cholesterol and may prevent Type 2 Diabetes.

Wheat bran is old-school when it comes to smoothie additives; it has fallen out of favour despite being very high in fibre, protein, magnesium, iron and vitamin B-6. Wheat bran has been linked to the reduction risk of breast and colon cancer, and may also help prevent Type 2 Diabetes.

Whatever additive you choose, I highly recommend adding between one and two tablespoons in total, except when using oats; that should be one quarter to one half cup. If one doesn't work for you, try another or a combination. I alternate between flax meal and ground chia seeds.

Smoothie sweeteners

Finally, there is the issue of sweeteners. You may find the smoothies are sweet enough without any additions; when I try new recipes, I will often omit or reduce the sweetener until after an initial taste test.

Pay attention to the ingredients you select. For example, some natural brands of peanut butter list one ingredient: peanuts; other brands add salt, sugar, and more. While it may be tempting to add a spoonful of strawberry jam in lieu of strawberries, you'll be adding a lot of sugar while sacrificing nutrition.

My belief is that simple and natural is best. Honey and maple syrup are my go-to sweeteners, although you may still catch me adding brown sugar to certain recipes, just because I love the flavor it adds. I am not a fan of stevia or agave syrup, but if they are your go-to sweetener, then by all means use them!

The SmoothieJune Challenge

Are you ready to try the SmoothieJune Challenge? It doesn't have to be June. You don't have to start on the first of the month, but it might take a little planning, depending on what you normally have on hand.

The challenge itself is straightforward: for one month, at least five days a week, you will start your day with a smoothie.

That's it.

You can pick one smoothie and drink it every day, or you can mix it up like I did. You can use recipes from SmoothieJune or find your own, or just start making it up as you go along. Sometimes mixing and matching is the best way to find your new favourite smoothie.

There's a long-standing theory that it takes twenty-one days to build a habit—that is, if you do something daily for that length of time, you'll get so used to doing it that you won't stop. Of course, there's plenty of research which shows that habits can take more or less time, depending on the task. To see the benefits of smoothies in your diet, I think it takes just a couple of weeks. I'm suggesting a month, because then you'll know for sure.

So if you're ready, choose your smoothies, make an ingredient list, go shopping, and start blending!

The SmoothieJune posts

Smoothie A Day For June – May 27, 2012

I started making smoothies for breakfast occasionally many years ago, but thanks to Pinterest, I figured out how to build a smoothie that keeps me full until lunch time by adding oats or (even better) chia seeds. Now I start my day with a breakfast smoothie almost every weekday.

I was hesitant on the chia seeds but decided to splurge once I found ground seeds. I still haven't worked up the courage to put spinach or other greens in my smoothies, but that's going to change. We've been on a bit of a "try-new-things" kick of late, and it's since it's been a while since I've done "a-month-of" anything, I thought I would challenge myself to try a new smoothie every day (Monday-Friday) through June.

My biggest challenge will be measuring; I don't normally measure my smoothies, in part because I'm not usually very alert at 6:30 in the morning.

I'm starting on Friday June 1 with a make-ahead smoothie (it needs to set overnight at least and will last 2-3 days in the fridge) then will get into the day-by-day ones the following Monday. I've been working on a schedule so I can buy and go through the non-standard ingredients more efficiently

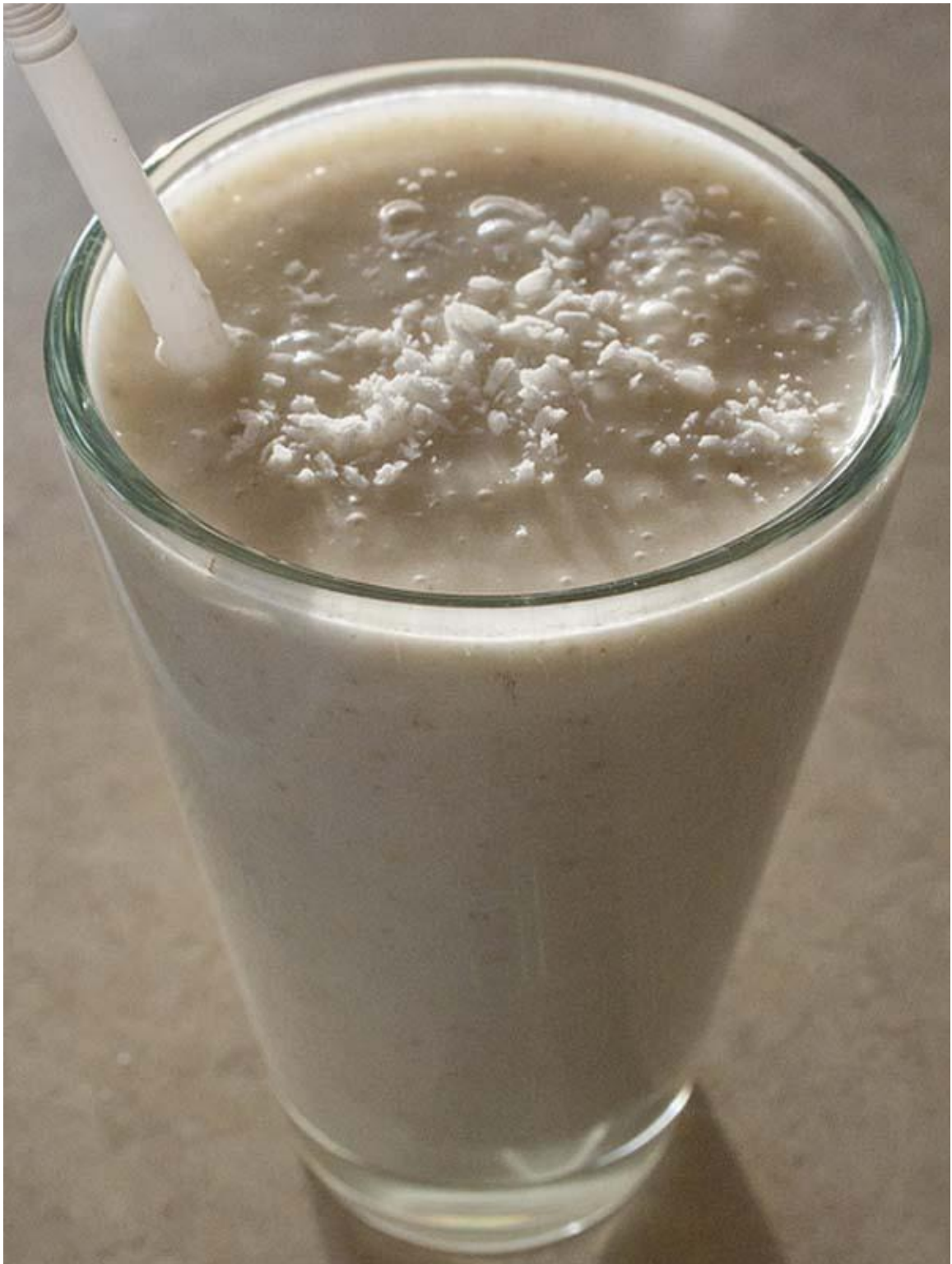
Aside from spinach (which is not really non-standard in this house, just in smoothies), I will need to find hemp powder, ground flax seed, pumpkin puree, beet juice, and frozen fruit of every variety (mango, raspberry, cherry...). Luckily, Victoria is full of stores where I can likely find all of this.

To get you started, here's one of my recipes: the smoothie pictured here is my take on a Piña Colada Smoothie. Roughly, this includes:

1 fresh banana
1/4 to 1/2 CUP quick cut oats
3/4 to 1 CUP Coconut Dream
1/2 CUP pineapple (either fresh cut chunks or canned & drained)
1/4 CUP Greek yogurt (plain or vanilla)
1 TSP shredded coconut to garnish (optional; you could also blend in directly)

Blend all until smooth; garnish with coconut. Enjoy!

Last word: the big addition here was the oats; they worked well, but they are no longer my booster of choice. If I were making this now, I would substitute two tablespoons of ground chia for the oats.



Cherry Vanilla Oatmeal – June 1, 2012

My month of smoothies starts with a make-ahead oatmeal-based smoothie: Cherry Vanilla Bean and Oatmeal

My goal is to follow the recipes as published and, for the most part, I did on this one. I had to make some minor substitutions: instead of cherry juice, I used a pomegranate-cherry blend; for skim milk, I used Coconut Dream; I never have low-fat yogurt in the house, so regular went into the mix. I don't have vanilla bean paste, but the recipe offered the option of vanilla extract, so I used that. It said honey was optional, so I opted to add it. All measurements and directions were otherwise followed.

A typical smoothie for me is 16-20 oz. I realize that this is a large serving—or enough for two smoothies in some houses—but I love and need breakfast to keep me full until close to noon, especially since it's a breakfast I consume before 7 a.m. When I carefully measured and blended this one yesterday, I saw the first problem: it's only 12 oz.

Before that, though, I had other issues: first, the half-cup of dried cherries was almost an entire bag—a LOT—and second, I do not recommend blending dried fruit without soaking it first! It was as if I'd thrown rocks into my blender.

This morning, Shawn asked, "What's the brown stuff in the mason jar?"

"That's my smoothie," I replied. It was the color of whole wheat bread dough, but was runny and cold. He made a sound somewhere between "eww" and "uugh."

"Yeah," I said, "I know."

So, how did it taste? Quite frankly, it tasted ***rather awful***.

Despite how much time as it spent in the blender, I was still left with chunks of cherries in the mix. At least they had softened overnight. I was thankful that I had some bubble tea straws that made drinking it a bit easier, but the texture wasn't the only problem. Unfortunately, the combo of ingredients really don't play well together—I could taste all of the components instead of a blended whole—and the kicker? After finishing it, I'm still quite hungry.

Original recipe from *The Yummy Life* blog

1/4 CUP uncooked oats (old-fashioned rolled oats recommended; do not use steel-cut oats)

1-1/2 TSPs dried chia seeds

3/4 CUP skim milk

1/2 CUP cherry juice

1/4 CUP low-fat yogurt (Greek yogurt recommended)
1/2 CUP dried cherries (or 1 CUP fresh, frozen, or canned cherries*)
1/4 TSP vanilla bean paste (or vanilla extract)
1 TSP honey, optional (or substitute preferred sweetener)

Add oats and chia seeds to blender; blend on high until texture of flour. Add milk and juice to blender; use spoon or spatula to stir in oats and chia from bottom. Add yogurt. Add cherries and vanilla bean paste (or extract). Blend on high until desired smoothness is achieved. Taste and add sweetener, if needed. Blend again. Transfer to pint (2 CUP) jar or container; refrigerate overnight, or a minimum of four hours, so oats, chia, and dried fruit can soften. Will keep in refrigerator at least two or three days. Shake before drinking.

Last word: there is no way I would trust one of these shakes after three days in the fridge.



Vanilla Chai Breakfast Shake – June 4, 2012

Learning from Friday's miserable experience, I really looked at the recipe for today's smoothie and decided I wasn't going to chance it—I was going to change it. It looked like it would taste great, but I could see right away that it was not going to keep me full (containing only 115 calories, most of which was from the banana).

I started out the same: one frozen banana and one cup of milk. Next came the spices, but that raised a debate: should I measure spices as suggested in the original recipe, or use the Tazo Chai concentrate we have in the fridge? Not much of a contest—chai concentrate includes black tea and the all-important caffeine; I can't get that from the spice cupboard.

Here's what my modified Vanilla Chai Breakfast Smoothie consisted of:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 CUP milk (I used almond milk)
- 1/2 CUP Tazo Chai concentrate
- 1/4 CUP vanilla yogurt
- 2 TBSP ground chia seeds
- dash of cinnamon to garnish

Dead simple—and it makes a little over 16 oz. The frozen banana really adds to the texture of the finished drink and the chia seeds thicken it a little further. I suspect most people will find the amount of chai a little intense, so you may wish to start with one tablespoon and add more as needed. Similarly, the chia seeds do not blend perfectly (even the ground ones), so for a less grainy texture you could omit or reduce that ingredient.

Last word: this one deserves a rematch, with the ground spices in place of the pricey concentrate.



Almond Banana Flaxseed – June 5, 2012

Today's smoothie from Ink *Lemonade* required very little modification except to halve some of the ingredients—I didn't need it to serve two!—but I am a flavour junkie, so I kept the almond butter and cinnamon at the “serves two” levels.

Almond butter was something we didn't have in the cupboard, but now that it's there I'm confident we'll go through it. Ground flaxseed, on the other hand, I was not so sure about. I bought some for this recipe and was hopeful it would blend as well as the chia seeds.

I should not have been concerned; this is very similar to the peanut-butter and banana smoothie that got me away from my usual fruity smoothies and started me on this challenge. In fact, I prefer this one to the peanut butter; the almond butter is very smooth, the flax (since it is ground) is well-blended, and the honey adds a nice layer of sweetness.

Tomorrow, I'll be moving away from brown-coloured smoothies to something fruity—and for the first time, something green.

Original Recipe from *Ink Lemonade*:

2 CUPS unsweetened vanilla almond milk
1/4 CUP almond butter
2 frozen ripe bananas (I break each banana into pieces, wrap in freezer-safe foil, and freeze overnight)
2 TBSPs ground flaxseed
1/4 TSP cinnamon
2 TBSPs honey or desired sweetness

Blend and enjoy.

Last word: this has become one of my mainstays when frozen bananas and almond butter are on hand.



Cheery Cherry Detox – June 6, 2012

Cherries again...so soon? Even after two great smoothies, I'm not sure I'm ready for cherry—but then Lexie's Kitchen offered up the Cheery Cherry Detox smoothie. While I love the idea of it, I know it's going to need some adjusting. It's made to serve up four cups (32 oz), there's no banana, and I also know I have to tone down the cherries. While I bought the Emergen-C powder, I didn't include it.

I couldn't find frozen cherries anywhere locally so I went with fresh. This is also the first smoothie I've made with greens, and I'm starting big and bold with kale.

I whirled everything in the blender and it came out a dark reddish-brown (the second photo shows the texture and is a better representation of the final colour)— not nearly the bright red I had been hoping for. I took a sip, made a face at the tartness, then looked at the list of ingredients again; I'd missed two things from the original list: lemon juice and liquid stevia. While we had both, I knew the lemon juice was not going to help the tartness, so I decided instead to go with honey.

I returned it to the blender and added a tablespoon of honey. It was better, though still a bit tart; anyone who says, "You'd never know there was kale in there!" is lying. That said, it's far better than Friday's lumpy cherry mess, but this is not the smoothie that won me over to including greens.

My recipe:

1/3 CUP cherries (halved and pitted)
1/2 CUP frozen raspberries
fresh kale (a handful in this case was four leaves of Russian kale)
3/4 CUP non-dairy milk (I used Coconut Dream)
2 TBSP ground chia seeds
1 TSP vanilla extract
1 TBSP honey
splash of sour cherry syrup

Last word: the flavour here was good, and now that we have a better blender, I probably could hide that kale. In hindsight, there's a workable variation in here somewhere.



Refresh Mango Ginger – June 7, 2012

Today's smoothie is inspired by The Glitter Guide's "Refresh: Mango-Ginger" variation. What I love about *The Glitter Guide*'s suggestions are that they give you a starter point and free license to modify. The first thing I had to modify was to add some liquid—the only liquid in the original was a squeeze of lime! I added water, ice and almond milk.

I reduced the mango because it's not my fave fruit, and two cups is a lot of mango. I upped the yogurt instead. Also, for me, one-quarter cup of chopped ginger would be insanity—it would not taste refreshing as much as it would send me screaming in the opposite direction. So, I started with one teaspoon of ginger (if you like ginger, add more!). I also added some chia seeds because that's the secret to keeping me full.

My recipe: Mango-Raspberry-Ginger

- 1 CUP frozen mango chunks
- 1 CUP frozen raspberries
- 1 banana
- 1/2 CUP water
- 1/4 CUP crushed ice
- 1/4 CUP almond milk
- 1/4 CUP yogurt
- 1 TBSP ground chia seeds
- 1 TSP chopped ginger
- squeeze of lime

It was so nice to see a pink smoothie emerge from my blender! It lives up to its "refreshing" title—and it was very cold with so much frozen fruit; it would be a great smoothie for a hot summer morning, but sadly we have March weather right now: rainy, windy, and below 10°C.

I won't be able to accurately judge the "how full does it keep me" aspect of this one, because Shawn offered me part of his spinach omelette this morning; I will say this was thick, smooth, and very tasty.

Last word: the secret to this recipe is that squeeze of lime as it brightens almost any fruit flavour; I do recall shivering from the overall iciness of this drink.



Anti-bloat Chocolate Berry – June 8, 2012

Doctor Oz presents today's questionable recipe: Anti-bloat chocolate berry. The name is not what drew me to this recipe. The anti-bloat is really a clear-your-system call; according to Dr. Oz, "Constipation is a common culprit that causes bloating." He then lists ways these ingredients will, uh, clear you out. Really though, I think this is purge-light. Dr. Oz suggests, "The caffeine in chocolate stimulates bowel movement." Come on! Maybe if that were the only caffeine in your diet, but for me, the amount in two tablespoons of chocolate chips is bush league.

This is what I would consider a beginner smoothie; it's not too out-of-the-ordinary, and it tastes like dessert. Since it's so simple, I followed this one exactly and supplemented with some regular breakfast instead of adding other ingredients to keep me full.

It blends down to about 20 oz—more than would fit in my glass (hey, look! I used a different glass today!). The only issue in putting together this very simple smoothie was that the chocolate chips did not blend well enough; some were too chunky and got stuck in the straw. This is largely because of my wimpy blender (anyone want to buy me a KitchenAid 5-speed model?) but, were I to do this again, I would grate dark chocolate to blend in.

Original Recipe from Doctor Oz

- 1 CUP strawberries
- 1 CUP raspberries
- 2 TBSP dark chocolate chips
- 1 CUP almond milk
- 1 CUP ice

Combine ingredients and blend!

Last word: this smoothie was not filling at all and certainly didn't prompt any purging of my system. Disappointing on many levels.



Carrot-Pineapple – June 11, 2012

The inspiration for this Monday morning smoothie came from *Real Simple*. Their recipe for a carrot-pineapple smoothie made me think of the carrot cake we often make that includes both grated carrot and pineapple, so I was hopeful that this would evoke that flavor. My favourite part of carrot cake is the cream cheese icing, so I was tempted to add some cream cheese; I decided the yogurt would have to stand in.

My variation worked largely with what was on hand:

3/4 CUP chopped pineapple (canned)
1 frozen banana
1/2 CUP orange juice
1/3 CUP chopped carrot (steamed and chilled overnight)
1/4 CUP vanilla yogurt
2 TBSP ground chia seeds

This is definitely a keeper. The flavours blend together effortlessly and the texture is just a little pulpy. There is no way I would guess it had carrots unless you told me! While it's difficult to see, this smoothie is a lovely pale peach colour with freckles from the chia seeds. I completely enjoyed every sip this morning.

Last word: while I have yet to return to this recipe, I think of it fondly. The added step of steaming the carrots the night before takes it out of the running most days.



Green Monster – June 12, 2012

I was supposed to start the week with a really green smoothie, but I forgot to buy the key ingredient on Sunday, so it had to wait until Tuesday. Instead of kale, this one uses spinach—lots of it. Kristin really sells the Green Monster Spinach Smoothie over at her blog, *Iowa Girl Eats*.

I decided this one could be followed “as-is”—though I was not sure my blender could really handle all that spinach. (I needn’t have worried; the blender worked it into the rest of the smoothie with no effort.) I’m not sure I got four cups of spinach in the finished drink; it was more like three cups, but since I was hesitant about the taste of this from the start, I figured that would do.

The Green Monster earns its name. It is *green*. This did not help my anticipation of the taste. I went outside to grab a photo in the best light, and only after I’d snapped a few photos did I finally take the plunge and take a sip.

It tasted like a peanut butter-banana smoothie, which it basically is.

I immediately felt like the character in Green Eggs and Ham, proclaiming, “I do like this green smoothie, I do!”

So, for the record, this is “*the green smoothie for people who don’t like green smoothies*.” It’s on my keeper list.

Original Recipe from *Iowa Girl Eats*:

- 1 frozen sliced banana
- 1 TBSP peanut butter
- 1/2 CUP 0% Vanilla Chobani Greek yogurt
- 1 CUP unsweetened Vanilla Almond Breeze (or other kind of milk)
- 4 CUPS baby spinach (or more, or less)

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.

Last word: not only was this the best green smoothie I tried during the challenge, it’s still the best I have found.



Immune-Boosting Berry-Spinach – June 13, 2012

There is more spinach in my glass today, inspired by this blueberry/pomegranate smoothie from Yummy Mummy. My variation uses blueberry juice, some honey to sweeten, and ground chia for fibre and protein—largely using what I had on hand.

3/4 CUP blueberry juice (I used SunRype Blueberry Harvest)
1 CUP fresh baby spinach
1/2 CUP frozen blueberries
1 banana
1/2 CUP vanilla yogurt
2 TBSP ground chia seeds
2 TSP honey

Once again, the spinach just disappears into the finished drink. The original called for one cup of blueberries; I misestimated and only scooped out just over a half-cup, so that's reflected in my recipe. Either way, it's going to taste like blueberries!

This one is also a great kid-friendly recipe: it's sweet, smooth, and fruity, and very, very purple.

Last word: I can verify the kid-friendliness of this recipe; my daughter gave it the thumbs-up despite knowing there was spinach lurking within the glass.



Fruit and Veggies – June 14, 2012

Today's smoothie comes from *Perry's Plate*. She calls this one "The Morning Smoothie" (for people who don't like green smoothies), but I'm calling it "Fruit and Veggies" since it includes strawberries, blueberries, carrots and spinach. I followed this one pretty close to the original because it looked close to yesterday's recipe.

After a first sip, I added a little honey because it tasted too tart, but I should have continued tinkering. I ought to have added more honey or included a banana or some yogurt or just made yesterday's smoothie again!

Instead, I poured it into a glass and took a photo. I tried to drink it, but after a few more sips I was just not enjoying it. I had to ultimately return it to the blender and add some yogurt (about one-third of a cup); that made it drinkable for me. Ultimately, I just don't like pomegranate juice—it's too intense. This might have been better with orange juice or blueberry juice.

This one is not a keeper for me; by the time I am done adapting it, it won't look anything like the one at *Perry's Plate*. It's a shame, really, because the color is so pretty.

Original recipe from *Perry's Plate*

3-4 frozen strawberries
about 1 CUP frozen blueberries
1 large carrot, cut into 3-4 pieces
a couple handfuls of fresh baby spinach
about 1 CUP 100% pomegranate juice (like POM)

Combine all ingredients in a large plastic cup or a wide-mouth quart-size mason jar. Blend with an immersion blender, adding more juice or water if you find it's too thick.

Last word: far too tart and too much of a challenge for my old blender.



Pumpkin Gingerbread – June 15, 2012

Yes, pumpkin! I love pumpkin pie so, even though it's June, I was curious how close this smoothie from Oh She Glows would come to matching the flavor. The only changes I made to the recipe were minor: I used a fresh banana in lieu of a frozen one (poor planning); I did not soak the oats or chia seeds, because instead of whole rolled oats and seeds, I used quick cut oats and ground seeds; and, finally, as it was very thick after all that, I did add some ice and a splash more almond milk (as suggested on the recipe page).

The weirdest thing for me was to scoop the pumpkin puree in there (I was pleasantly surprised to find that the pumpkin pie filling in the can had one ingredient: pumpkin.) Actually, scratch that—the weirdest thing was adding molasses. We always seem to have molasses in the house, but I have no idea, other than making traditional gingerbread, why it exists. Anyway, in it went along with the spices and everything else.

Final verdict? Neither a hit nor miss. It was not sweet enough for my taste. I should have realized from the recipe that it was not going to be very sweet—pumpkin pie almost always includes sugar (usually brown sugar)—so I guess the idea was to use the molasses as an homage to the brown sugar; it sure didn't make it flavorful. As for the pumpkin, it wasn't the primary flavor (banana) or even the secondary one (cinnamon), so I'd say this particular recipe needs some tweaking.

Original recipe from *Oh She Glows*

1 CUP almond milk, plus a bit more if necessary
1/4 CUP rolled oats
1 TBSP chia seeds
1/2 CUP pureed pumpkin
1 TBSP blackstrap molasses
1 small frozen banana
1 TSP cinnamon
1/2 TSP ginger
pinch nutmeg
ice, if desired

Soak the oats, almond milk, and chia seeds for at least an hour or overnight. This helps them digest better and it also gives the smoothie a smoother texture. Place all ingredients into blender and blend until smooth. Add ice if desired.

Last word: there are better pumpkin pie smoothies out there; skip this one.



Lemon-Orange Citrus – June 18, 2015

At the halfway mark in my SmoothieJune experiment, I reassessed the remaining smoothies I'd initially selected and turfed a lot of them for various reasons. I have decided to omit cherry and pomegranate as they are too prominent and drown out any other flavors; there will be no more dried fruit (what *was* I thinking with the cherries?) and will use minimal new ingredients. I went searching for a new batch of recipes (being mindful that Pinterest has been overwhelmed with spam-linking, especially in the food and drink category) and found a half-dozen more so that I could at least plan this week through.

Today's recipe is from Prevention Magazine. I liked the simplicity of it, but can you guess what's missing? Yup, something to keep me full: chia seeds, or a banana, or flax meal. It calls for flaxseed oil, but I really didn't want to buy yet another ingredient that I might never use, so I took a chance with the ground flaxseed. I also swapped out the skim/soy milk for one of the other milks I had in the fridge; I chose almond milk. Finally, I skipped the ice.

The resulting smoothie was one of the thinnest so far but it tasted great—very much like an Orange Julius. The ground flax seeds give the drink a freckled look, but I didn't find the texture to be problematic. If I were to do this again, I'd use two oranges, but otherwise, it was perfect.

Original recipe from *Prevention Magazine*

1 c skim or soy milk
6 oz (80-calorie) lemon yogurt
1 med orange peeled, cleaned, and sliced into sections
handful of ice
1 TBSP flaxseed oil (MUFA)

Combine milk, yogurt, orange, and ice in a blender. Blend for one minute, transfer to a glass, and stir in flaxseed oil.

Last word: very tasty, but not a frequent flier—lemon yogurt was a difficult ingredient to track down; also, I was hungry ninety minutes later.



Strawberry-Banana-Kiwi – June 19, 2015

Today's smoothie is a familiar fruity combo from Smoothie Web. When I asked Shawn about kiwis (i.e. I needed one for this recipe and did he want more) he said, "But you hate kiwis." It's true—I *do* hate their texture when they are cut up and served as part of a fruit plate or on a cake or something similar. However, I have been known to drink strawberry-kiwi juice blends, and a big part of this experiment was "expanding my palate"—so kiwi it is!

The only significant change I made was to add two tablespoons of ground chia seeds. When I opened the freezer, I realized I didn't quite have a full cup of frozen strawberries, either, but I put in what I did have and crossed my fingers (about three-quarters of a cup). I was short a little on the strawberry yogurt, too, but I just made up the difference with vanilla.

The first thing I noticed about this smoothie was that it was very sweet. The next was that I couldn't pick out the kiwi, which led me to ask, "Why bother"? Bottom line: this was tasty, filling, and a pretty pink colour, but it probably won't make my top ten.

As a side note: my intention for this challenge was never to "lose weight"—not directly. One of the goals was to find smoothies that would keep me full enough until lunch so that I would not be tempted to buy sugary baked goods at coffee time. Since starting this, I can now say I've only succumbed to sweets twice. As a result (as well as the healthier than eggs-and-sausage breakfasts), I've lost about eight pounds over the past two weeks. I'll be curious to see if the pattern continues.

Original recipe from *Smoothie Web*

- 1 CUP frozen strawberries
- 1 kiwi
- 1 banana
- 1 CUP strawberry yogurt
- 1/4 CUP apple juice

Last word: this smoothie was responsible for kiwi finding their way into our crisper drawers again.



Spring Clean your Diet – June 20, 2012

Yes, that's pretty much the name given to this smoothie over at Jasmine and Vanilla. It's basically a green smoothie, and I'm using it as a base rather than following it directly. This was one of the most spam-repeated posts on Pinterest—I had to use Google image search to find the original post because every link I could find with the very appealing picture led to a spam site. *Sigh*.

So, the recipe starts with “juice of one orange” — sorry, at 6 a.m., if I am using a fresh orange, I'm putting in the whole orange, or I'm using orange juice. In this instance, I went with the former. Banana and pear, check! Kale...hmm. I'm pretty sure I declared “no more kale,” but I'm going to give it one more shot. I picked a few leaves out of the garden last night so that it would be as fresh as possible. I also added one tablespoon of ground flaxseed. I wasn't sure this would be creamy enough without either yogurt (or at least almond milk), so I blended it up first for a taste test. Creaminess wasn't the issue, but it was too tart for me, so I added one-quarter cup of almond milk to try and balance the flavor.

What can I say about this one? I drank it. It wasn't horrible, but I could taste the competing flavors of the orange, pear and kale; contrary to what the original post suggested, they do not play well together. At least I couldn't taste the flax.

Original recipe from *Jasmine and Vanilla*

the base is the juice of 1 large orange

1 banana peeled and sliced

3 leaves of Kale (without the stem). I think Italian Kale, also called Dinosaur Kale, tastes the best!

1 pear, sliced (you can use apple if you don't have pears)

Blend it all on high speed in your blender of choice. ENJOY!

Last word: pear and orange do not play well; kale does not help the situation.



Straight A – June 21, 2012

When I was looking through the freezer, I found a peach I'd stashed in there. I figured I needed a recipe that could use it, and I tracked down this "Straight A Smoothie" from Good Mood Food. It looked great, with mostly simple ingredients, but in the end I changed a lot of it, so my variation is listed below.

To begin with, I read "one cup of freshly-squeezed orange juice." We went over this yesterday—I am *not* squeezing oranges first thing in the morning! Besides, I had a carton of orange juice in the fridge, so a cup went in the blender. Next up, one small fresh peach. Well, I had a big, frozen peach that had thawed overnight—but when I opened the baggie, it smelled wrong, so it went into the compost instead of the blender. The nectarine did go in, as did one banana (who measures bananas frozen or otherwise in cups? Not me).

Since I didn't have a fresh peach, I was glad that I had a small container of peach yogurt to add. I skipped the apple cider vinegar—we didn't have any and, despite the health benefits, I really didn't feel the need to buy a whole bottle for the sake of one teaspoon. Instead, I added my usual two tablespoons of ground chia seeds as well as the maple syrup. I skipped the ice, too.

- 1 CUP orange juice
- 1 banana
- 1 nectarine
- 1 peach
- 1 small container peach or vanilla yogurt (about 1/2 CUP)
- 1 TSP maple syrup
- 2 TBSP ground chia seeds

Overall, I enjoyed this smoothie a lot. It was not too sweet and not too tart, although it would have been much tastier with the peach, which is why I left that in the recipe. I think I would call my variation "Okanagan Orange" because the best tree-fruit I've ever tasted (aside from that which I've grown myself) comes from there.

Last word: I made so many changes to the original recipe it's difficult to consider my review valid; overall this was not a good choice for the challenge.



Banana Pineapple Green – June 22, 2012

I was overdue for another green smoothie, so once again, I'm taking a cue from *Good Mood Food* with her Banana-Pineapple-Green smoothie.

It looked super simple, and I like that, but I knew I was going to need to change it up a little bit. I never balance out a smoothie with ice water (bah) and I need some fibre in there. I was hesitant to put in two bananas, but I gave it a shot.

My version:

- 2 bananas
- 1 CUP pineapple (canned)
- 2 CUPS spinach (or more)
- 1 TBSP ground flax seed
- 1/2 CUP orange juice

The result? This was one super-thick smoothie that totally needed some ice or a frozen banana to make it colder. As with all the other spinach smoothies, this one hid the spinach well. If I do this one again, I will add more pineapple, use only one banana and maybe add some yogurt.

Last word: two bananas is almost always double the number you need in a smoothie.



Pineapple-Mango – June 25, 2012

For this last week of SmoothieJune I am trying to use up some of the ingredients I bought but would not normally have in the house otherwise. Top of the list were the frozen mango chunks; mango is not my favourite fruit.

I found inspiration at Simply Scratch with a pineapple-mango smoothie recipe. At this point, though, I'm mostly using recipes for the general idea rather than following them to the letter, which means that my variation changed things up. I skipped the vanilla and the honey because I knew this fruit combo would be plenty sweet; I used a whole banana (because I hate having half a banana kicking around). And since the pineapple I had around was still in the juice from the can, it went in, too.

My Pineapple-Mango Smoothie:

- 1 CUP pineapple chunks (canned)
- 1/2 CUP pineapple juice
- 1 CUP mango chunks (frozen)
- 1 banana
- 1/4 CUP vanilla yogurt
- 1 TBSP ground flax seed.

The finished smoothie is a nice bright yellow with little brown flecks of flax, and it tastes wonderfully sweet. It's tasty enough to convince me to keep mango chunks around!

Last word: this one is a perfect summer recipe or winter pick-me-up; it's also a good excuse to buy mangos on sale. Freeze them yourself for later.



Peach-Raspberry – June 26, 2012

While trying to fill out this week's selections, I just plain ran out, so this one is all my own creation. The combo of peach and raspberry is a common one because of the sweet/tart contrast; I didn't just pull that out of thin air. I wanted to try a banana-free smoothie this morning, too. I did a tentative search for a recipe to match, but eventually just gave up and decided to wing it.

Here's my take:

2 medium peaches (fresh, diced)
1/2 CUP raspberries (frozen)
1/2 CUP almond milk
1/4 CUP yogurt (I used honey-flavoured Greek yogurt)
1 TBSP honey
1 TBSP ground chia seeds

Even with the honey and yogurt, the raspberries really stand out in this recipe, but it wasn't too tart for me. The smoothie is also a beautiful dark pink shade, so it's pretty! Bonus!

Last word: peaches and raspberries were made for each other, and the balance here is ideal.



Harper's Favorite – June 27, 2012

Before you think I've gone rogue and started looking to King Harper for smoothie tips, today's recipe comes from Harper's Happenings. "Harper's Favorite" includes spinach, blueberries, "mixed fruit" (strawberries, papaya, mango, pineapple), and other standard stuff.

I didn't have a bag of mixed fruit so I just upped the blueberries and threw in some mango and raspberries. Even though the original post was honest that the colour would be an icky brown, I was determined to give it a shot. My blender choked on the amount of frozen fruit, so I did add a bit more almond milk.

My variation:

- 3/4 CUP blueberries
- 1/2 CUP mango chunks
- 1/4 CUP raspberries
- 1 banana
- 3/4 CUP almond milk
- 2 CUPS spinach
- 1 TBSP honey
- 1 TBSP ground flax seeds

The result? A ridiculously tasty dark purple smoothie! Keeper!

Last word: the only reason this one isn't in regular rotation is the number of ingredients. Simple is better at 6:30 in the morning.



Chocolate-Raspberry – June 28, 2012

Today's smoothie is inspired by a very simple recipe at 52 Kitchen Adventures. Naturally, I made changes, but they were subtle.

Her recipe had only four ingredients, plus one optional. I added the optional banana, and snuck in some chia seeds. I also added more cocoa and more milk than suggested so that it would be noticeably chocolatey and more than 14 oz.

My chocolate-raspberry smoothie:

3/4 CUP milk (I used almond milk)
1 banana (frozen)
1/2 CUP raspberries (frozen)
1/2 CUP yogurt (I used Greek vanilla)
2 TBSP cocoa
2 TBSP chia seeds

The end result is almost dessert-worthy and likely a keeper! Now I think I am done with raspberries for a while; my final smoothie tomorrow will be coffee-based.

Last word: chocolate-raspberry is better left to the dessert plate than the blender; it was filling but had me craving something sweet all morning.



Coffee-Banana – June 29, 2012

With the amount of coffee I drink, it was inevitable for me to seek out a coffee smoothie. I am rounding out my month of smoothies with this one, inspired by the Coffee Smoothie from Best Health. Their version included berries, but I wasn't keen on a coffee-berry blend this morning, so I put in a second banana. I also skipped the cinnamon (not a fan of that in my coffee) and doubled the cocoa to make it a little more like mocha.

Also, I added chia seeds (I know, what a surprise!). Doing so finished off the first package of chia seeds, which is why I only put in one tablespoon instead of the usual two.

Coffee-Banana Smoothie:

- 1 CUP coffee (brewed then chilled is ideal)
- 2 bananas (frozen)
- 1 CUP yogurt (plain)
- 1 TBSP cocoa
- 1 TBSP ground chia seeds

The resulting smoothie is surprisingly thin, despite two bananas and all that yogurt. It looks like chocolate milk—complete with frothy bubbles—and tastes almost like one of those expensive chilled mocha drinks. I would bet that adding ice would cinch the deal. This was very satisfying and definitely lands in my top ten.

Seriously, how could I not love something with all those bubbles!

Last word: I've yet to repeat this smoothie because I keep thinking there is a better option out there.

Next up, I will be doing a full report card of SmoothieJune, listing my favourites and offering my thoughts on the experiment.

Many thanks to all of you who have offered your feedback and who have been following along! Oh, and for those curious about weight-loss: I'm down about eleven pounds over the month. Yay for healthy smoothies!



SmoothieJune Roundup – July 2, 2012

Over the month of June I tried twenty-one smoothies. Of those, about half were good enough to be considered “keepers”; a few more could use some tweaking, and the rest shall never grace my kitchen again.

Pictured in the blender are the ingredients for Harper’s Favorite—one I would do again, but not in my top five.

I learned more than a few things along the way, but the basic rule, as far as I am concerned, is that every smoothie should include some fruit, some yogurt and/or milk, and either chia seeds (my first choice), flax seeds, or oatmeal. Beyond that, the ingredients are flexible. Without these ingredients, they don’t taste as good and don’t keep my hunger at bay long enough.

Other discoveries:

- I found that dried fruit is a stupid thing to add to a smoothie—at least with my wimpy little blender.
- Nut butters are great additions that can hide anything remotely healthy from hesitant smoothie drinkers.
- I really don’t like cherry juice or pomegranate juice.
- Ground chia seeds are some kind of miracle food and are my default protein/nutrient additive.
- Of all the milks I tried, the almond milk provided the best blend without overpowering flavour.
- Spinach was surprisingly easy to blend in, but kale was nearly impossible to ignore.

Oh, and one more thing: Less is better. The more ingredients I had to gather and add, the less likely it was to be a “winner.”

What were the winners? Peach-Raspberry, Carrot-Pineapple and Coffee-Banana are all recipes I will be repeating. The best of the green smoothies was the Green Monster; it was simple, tasted great, and I almost always have all the ingredients on hand. Rounding out the top five was too tough to call, but both the Almond-Banana-Flaxseed and the Lemon-Orange-Citrus will be back on my menu in the coming weeks.

Close (but not in the top five running) were Harper’s Favorite, Vanilla Chai Nana, Pineapple-Mango and the Immune-Boosting Berry-Spinach (with blueberry juice instead of pomegranate). I don’t always have the ingredients these ones call for—so they may not be in the running as often—but they are definitely keepers. The Straight-A and the Mango-Ginger were, once I adjusted them, also pretty tasty;

the rest ranged from okay to terrible and needed significant variation to be in my winner list.

Overall, the experiment was a success. My two primary goals were (1) to expand my smoothie repertoire and (2) to do so with smoothies that would keep me full enough to keep me from spending extra money (and ingesting empty calories) at coffee break. I would certainly say I managed both of those goals. The unexpected bonus was the weight loss, something I hope will continue (albeit slower) over the next few months as I continue to keep smoothies as a breakfast staple.

New Recipes and Reviews

Protein Powder Power-up (blogged October 13, 2013)

When I started adding smoothies to my diet, the goal was twofold: to get more fruit and vegetables into my diet and to keep me full just as long as a big “traditional” breakfast of eggs, meat and toast.

The key to keeping me full seems to be protein; ground chia seeds were working well for that, but I decided to try a few protein powders to see if they would do the trick or not—and also to see if they could replace the thickness that the yogurt adds. Typically, these powders are meant to be added to milk (dairy or non) or water without anything else. I still want to get some fruit in, so I pared down my usual smoothies.

After learning from my greens booster experiences, I bought single-serving packets instead of full containers. (Oh, and the best greens booster is real greens, spinach or kale. Everything else tends to taste like seaweed and sadness.)

Here’s what I tried:

Harmonized Protein vanilla flavour (Progressive) — This was smooth, smelled like a vanilla shake, and didn’t get in the way of other ingredients (banana, blueberries, almond milk). However, I was hungry by 11:00—about an hour earlier than usual. Still, would likely buy and use more of that.

Raw Protein vanilla (Garden of Life) — When I opened it, there was a scent I can only describe as reminiscent of Play-Doh; I should NOT have added it to the blender. I had almond milk, frozen strawberries and a kiwi, plus this. It came out kind of an unfortunate yellow-brown and the Play-Doh scent lingered. The flavour was so awful that I couldn’t even finish half of it. *Bleah!*

Vega One vanilla chai (Vega) — With its slightly dull green colour, I was hesitant, but threw it in with a banana, almond milk, ice and a dash of extra cinnamon. It tasted good and filled me right up. It’s also more than protein; the supplement includes fibre, greens, probiotics, omega 3 and antioxidants.

Proteins+ (Genuine Health) — This one looked, smelled and tasted the best, but with blueberries and a banana plus almond milk, I was ridiculously hungry only three hours later. This made me both sad and angry; I ended up eating my lunch before 11 a.m.

So, after all that, I will watch for sales on the Harmonized Protein; I think I am going back to ground chia seeds, which helped keep me full till noon at least—plus they are a complete protein, and offer better value for my dollar, because I can get many more servings out of a bag.



Alice's Basic Breakfast Smoothie

1 CUP almond milk
1 banana
1 CUP frozen berries (strawberries and/or blueberries)
2 TBSP plain yogurt

The almond milk helps to add protein, while the fruit (since it is blended whole fruit) contains fibre that isn't found in juices. Both blueberries and strawberries are high in vitamin C and antioxidants. The yogurt helps with vitamin D and probiotics (those good gut bacteria that media is always talking about).

Consider this colourful and naturally sweet smoothie a win with kids who might not otherwise eat breakfast, or who reach for sugary, sweet options like toaster breakfast snacks or fruity sugar-bomb style cereals.

More adventurous kids may be willing, as she was, to start adding hemp seeds to the basic smoothie, giving it a significant boost of essential nutrients, omega 3 oils and easily digested protein. Typically she now adds two teaspoons of Hemp Hearts to the above.



Cheryl's Greenya Colada

Like a piña colada, the dominant flavor in this smoothie is pineapple-coconut, but it comes out very, very bright green thanks to the spinach and cucumber. This one uses both coconut oil and ground chia as boosters and a frozen banana to thicken it.

- 1/2 CUP almond milk
- 1 frozen banana
- 1/2 can of pineapple chunks (about a half cup)
- 1/2 small cucumber, chopped but not peeled
- 1 CUP fresh spinach
- 2 TBSP grated coconut
- 1 TBSP coconut oil
- 1 TBSP ground chia

The best part of this smoothie is just how bright the green is—it's cheerful! If you like your smoothies on the sweeter side, I'd suggest throwing in a spoonful of honey or maple syrup; otherwise, this is a very refreshing, bright, and filling start to the day.



Green Tea Fruit Refresher

I am not a huge fan of plain green tea—even hot—but we have a big box of powdered green iced tea mix, and I thought it was a good opportunity for a non-dairy smoothie base. I scrolled through my Pinterest board for some inspiration and then went to see what we had in the kitchen.

There was no apple, but we had applesauce. I couldn't find any mango or pineapple, but we had frozen peach slices. There was half a lime calling my name, and while we were out of ground chia, there was still half a bag of flax meal.

1 CUP iced green tea
1 banana
1/2 CUP applesauce (unsweetened)
3 to 4 slices peach (frozen)
juice of half a lime
1 TBSP flax meal or ground chia

While ground chia would have blended better, the rest of the fruit blends very nicely; the green tea and lime are reduced to the accent for this refreshing dairy-free pale green smoothie. If you want something a little brighter green just add a handful of fresh spinach! If you use fresh or canned peaches, add a couple of ice cubes to the mix to chill the smoothie.

Shawn's Green Thai Smoothie

Spicy peanut is the base and dominant flavor of this extremely green smoothie. Slightly spicy, and almost fruit-free, this is more suited to a midday meal or post-workout refreshment. The Thai flavouring comes from a combination of sweet chili sauce, lime, tamarind and cilantro; if you have sweet Thai basil on hand, that blends in very nicely too.

2 TSP peanut butter (smooth or crunchy, but best to use a brand that doesn't add salt or sugar)
2 TBSP raw blanched peanuts (if you don't have peanuts, use more peanut butter)
1 lime (peeled)
1 TSP sweet chili sauce
1 TSP tamarind
1 CUP fresh spinach
half a bell pepper
1 CUP cilantro (and/or sweet Thai basil)
2 carrots (use ice crusher or chop/grate before adding)
1 TBSP fresh chopped ginger (pickled ginger or a smaller amount of dry ginger may be substituted)
1 clove garlic
2-4 oz water

I found it far too thick, but adding more water balanced that out easily. I also found it too close to room temperature; if I made this on my own, I would use ice cubes to chill it and thin it down. Otherwise, I was quite surprised how much I enjoyed this one!



Shawn's Spicy Hoisin Smoothie

We live on the Canadian West Coast where a significant portion of the population is Chinese. Hoisin is a sauce used in several Asian cuisines and is sometimes referred to as “Asian Ketchup” as it has the same consistency—and there is a tendency to use it the same way. It can also be compared to A1 Steak Sauce or British HP sauce because of the layers of flavors that make up the sauce. It ends up being the defining flavor in this savoury smoothie that Shawn often makes in the morning or for lunch.

Unlike most of the banana and dairy-based smoothies, the consistency of this one is more like a blended soup—and before you make faces at the idea of a cold, spicy vegetable soup, have you ever had a bottle of V-8 juice?

Shawn makes his smoothies spicy so that they kickstart the metabolism and help get the body into calorie-burning mode. If spicy isn't your thing, you can dial back the ginger, bell pepper, hoisin, hot sauce and sweet chili sauce.

2 carrots
1 knuckle fresh ginger (peeled)
half a bell pepper (red or orange)
whole orange (peeled)
half a lime (peeled)
1 CUP fresh spinach
2 TBSPs Hoisin sauce
1 TBSP Thai sweet chili sauce
1 TSP hot sauce (like Frank's Red Hot or Sriracha)
2 TBSP grated coconut
1 TBSP ground chia seeds
1 TBSP coconut oil
water and almond milk to make 16 oz.

Use ice-crusher function for hard vegetables or pre-chop before adding. Peel the citrus fruit and the ginger. Gradually add water while blending to keep the mixture moving.

When this smoothie is finished it will be thick, spicy, and have a little more pulp than some of the other recipes. However, Shawn swears by this mix, which he varies based on what's in our fridge. Along with the hot sauces, the coconut oil is also a key ingredient for metabolism.



Zombie Smoothie (blogged March 5, 2013)

Is the Zombie Smoothie better than brains? I hope so. My mornings often start a little like this:



...but when I did my SmoothieJune challenge last year, I discovered that the boost was pretty good. It was at least enough to get me looking (and feeling) more human—living, even—and while I generally stick to a few standbys for combos, once in a while I try something new.

Unfortunately, experimenting with new smoothie flavours comes with a few risks. Sure, the ingredients might work together on paper, but they don't always translate to a tasty and visually pleasing drink.

Such was the case with my smoothie this morning. I wanted a green smoothie, and I figured peach-blueberry was as good as any other combination since I often use blueberries to mask the greens.

Unfortunately, the resulting smoothie was the color of rotting flesh as seen in zombie films.

This was not appetizing, but I didn't have time for a do-over. I took a sip and it tasted fine. Next time, I will either use more blueberries or a non-transparent container. In the meantime, instead of dubbing it something cutesy like "Peachy Green" it gets to be immortalized as the Zombie Smoothie.

Make your own Zombie Smoothie:

(NOTE: All measurements are approximate. At 6:30 a.m., I do *not* measure, so your mileage may vary!)

Add to blender:

one banana (fresh)
1/2 can peach slices (packed in water)
1/4 CUP frozen blueberries
1/2 CUP almond milk (or whatever milk you choose)

blend, then add

1/4 CUP plain yogurt
1 TBSP ground chia seeds
1 TBSP brown sugar (optional)

Assess thickness; add more yogurt or milk to thicken or thin at this point; add two handfuls (or top up the blender jar) of fresh spinach and blend! You should then have a nice green-grey freshly-dead looking smoothie that actually tastes pretty good.

Bottoms UP!



A few final words

I'm not a doctor, dietician or scientist. I don't consider myself an expert on smoothies, but I can tell you that adding smoothies to my routine improved my health: I lost weight initially and have maintained that weight loss, boosted my energy levels, changed my snacking habits, and made my breakfast routine pretty straightforward.

I am no longer afraid of kale or kiwi, chia, or coconut oil. I've expanded my palate, and I am confident enough that I can wing it with what is on hand if I need a substitution or forget to go shopping.

After a month of making smoothies, my muscle memory adapted and I started to habitually reach for the blender right after starting the coffee maker. Now, my go-to recipes have few ingredients, all of which are easy to keep on hand, so even at my most bleary-eyed, I can make a quick, healthy smoothie.

SmoothieJune was a huge success for me. I hope this book inspires you to try your own SmoothieJune challenge!

If you do try the challenge, or if you try any of the recipes in this book, I'd love to hear your results. You can email smoothiejune@thosedewolfes.com with comments or feedback.

About the author

Cheryl DeWolfe's writing explores themes at the edges of the norm, from the very dark to the very silly. She has honed her skills through a constant stream of haiku and media reviews in between longer works.

A regular author at Life as a Human, her articles reflect her curiosity about human behaviour. She is currently working on an urban haiku collection, a young adult novel, and a social media guide.

Cheryl lives in Victoria, British Columbia (Canada) where she is an avid creator and consumer of media who also appreciates the raw nature of the Pacific Ocean and the coastal rainforest.

If you want to follow Cheryl's smoothie inspirations on Pinterest, follow her "wake up to this" board at: pinterest.com/victriviaqueen/wake-up-to-this/

Original and follow-up SmoothieJune posts can be found on her blog at: www.cheryl.dewolfe.bc.ca/flotsam/category/smoothiejune/

More books and products from Those DeWolfes press at: thosedewolfes.com/products.html